Sandbar Lake Provincial Park

Management Plan

Ontario
Ministry of Natural Resources
Lyn McLeod
Minister

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APPROVAL STATEMENT

We are pleased to approve the Sandbar Lake Provincial Park Management Plan, as official policy for the management and development of this park. The plan reflects this Ministry's intent to protect natural and cultural features of Sandbar Lake Provincial Park and develop high quality opportunities for outdoor recreation and heritage appreciation for both residents of Ontario and visitors to the Province.

Regional Director
Northwestern Region

Director, Parks and
Recreational Areas Branch

SANDBAR LAKE PROVINCIAL PARK
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Sandbar Lake Provincial Park is located on Highway 599, 12 km. northeast of Ignace and approximately 120 km. west of Dryden. It is administered by the Ignace District of the Ministry of Natural Resources. The park's regional setting and neighbouring provincial parks are illustrated in Figure 1.

The park was created in 1970 (under Ontario Regulation 165/70) with an area of 3,157 hectares. In 1974 and again in 1983, it was recommended that the park be expanded to include 1,926 hectares of adjacent land lying east of Highway 599. This expansion took place in January 1986 under O.Reg. 52/86, resulting in a total park area of 5,083 hectares.

Representative of Ontario Site Region 4S (Hills 1959), the park is situated by a sub-humid climate with short warm summers and long cold winters. It is situated on the southern margin of the Boreal Forest Region in the section described by Rowe (1972) as the Upper English River. Vegetation type is characterized by a predominantly coniferous forest cover and forms part of the transition zone between the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence forest and the Boreal forest.

The park is located within the Canadian Shield and the terrain is generally rolling with some cliffs and exposed bedrock. The landscape of the park is characterized by outwash plain and the glacial features associated with the Hartmann Moraine. Significant natural features found in the park include occurrence of three leaved cinquefoil and Hookers and Arethusa Orchid, a bog lake and a red pine stand, a species which occurs at the northern limit of its range. Also of importance is the meadows community associated with Assin Creek, situated adjacent to the Day Use area.

Presently, use of the park is limited to day-use and car camping opportunities. Future developments will emphasize provision of further hiking opportunities in the expanded area of the park, which will provide visitors with increased opportunities to explore the natural environment. Also, several proposed and replacement facilities are proposed for the park, contingent on the availability of funding.

The park's greatest appeal will likely continue to be its scenic and recreational experience value and the peace and quiet it offers visitors as part of a quality recreational experience.

The management policies contained in this 20-year plan will provide direction for the orderly development of the park and guide its management into the next century.

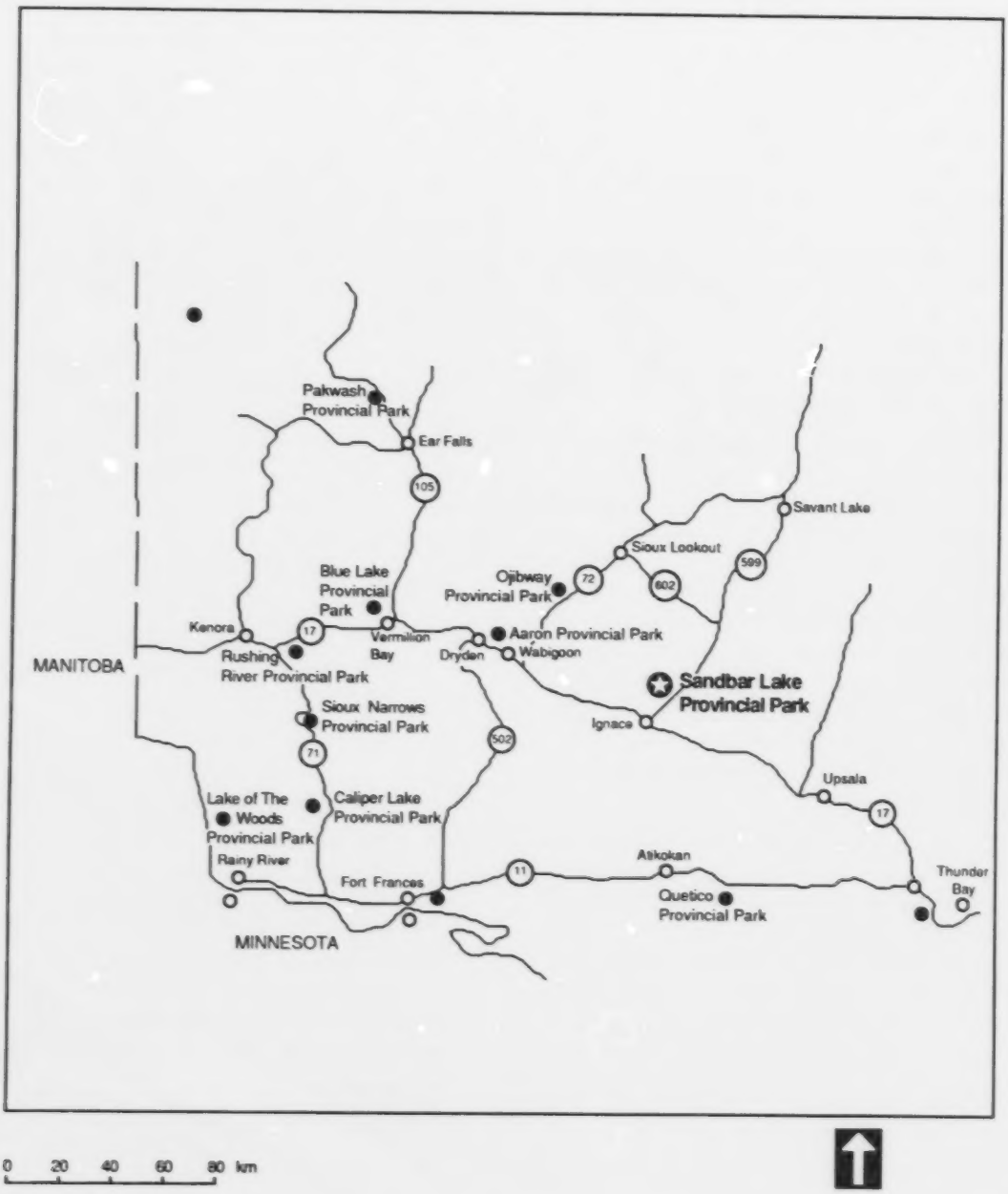
1.1 SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT PARK ISSUES AND THEIR RESOLUTION

Several issues concerning Sandbar Lake Provincial Park have arisen over the past few years and during the preparation of this plan. A summary of these issues follows:

Figure 1

Regional Setting

● Provincial Parks



1.1.1 Park Classification and Expansion

Perhaps one of the more important planning issues has been the reassessment of the park's classification and expansion. Although the park was designated a Recreation Class park since its creation in 1970, the Ignace District Land Use Guidelines (1983) recommended that the park's classification be changed to Natural Environment, which was seen to be more in keeping with the role of the park.

This classification change is further supported with the expansion of the park area, to include the adjacent recreation area. This park expansion was initially proposed in 1974 and recommended in D.L.U.G. in 1983, and increases the park from 3,157 hectares to 5,083 hectares. The area includes nine lakes of varying sizes, a large stand of red pine, and a bald eagle nesting site. It adds significantly to the diversity of earth and life science features contained within the park and provides a higher quality, more varied park experience. The expanded park area also includes an existing Junior Ranger Camp.

Given the above considerations, and consistent with D.L.U.G. recommendations in 1983, this park management planning process reaffirms that the park classification change from Recreation to that of Natural Environment is indeed appropriate for Sandbar Lake Provincial Park.

1.1.2 Delineation of Western Park Boundary

The Great Lakes Forest Products 325 Road closely parallels the park's western boundary. (Refer to Figure 2). Five kilometres of this road is situated with the park boundary varying between 200 metres and one kilometre. (Refer to Figure 3). Several concerns have been raised regarding this area including: the lack of natural or recreational values found in this vicinity, potential enforcement problems particularly during hunting season, and the possibility of jurisdiction over the road being granted to a local services board. This would also serve to create a geographic boundary.

Because of these concerns, this plan recommends that the park's western boundary be delineated to coincide with the Great Lakes 325 Road right-of-way. This would result in a total of approximately 280 hectares being deregulated from the park area.

1.1.3 Uncontrolled Access to Sandbar Lake/Patented Lake Adjacent to Park Boundary

In addition to the 325 Road, the presence of patented land in the form of a tourist lodge and campground also allows uncontrolled access to Sandbar Lake. This patented land lies in the middle portion of the southern shore of Sandbar Lake, and affords unrestricted access to the lake and therefore the park. The property is accessed by a one km. sideroad from the north side of Highway 599, and leads to the lodge property which occupies approximately 4 hectares.

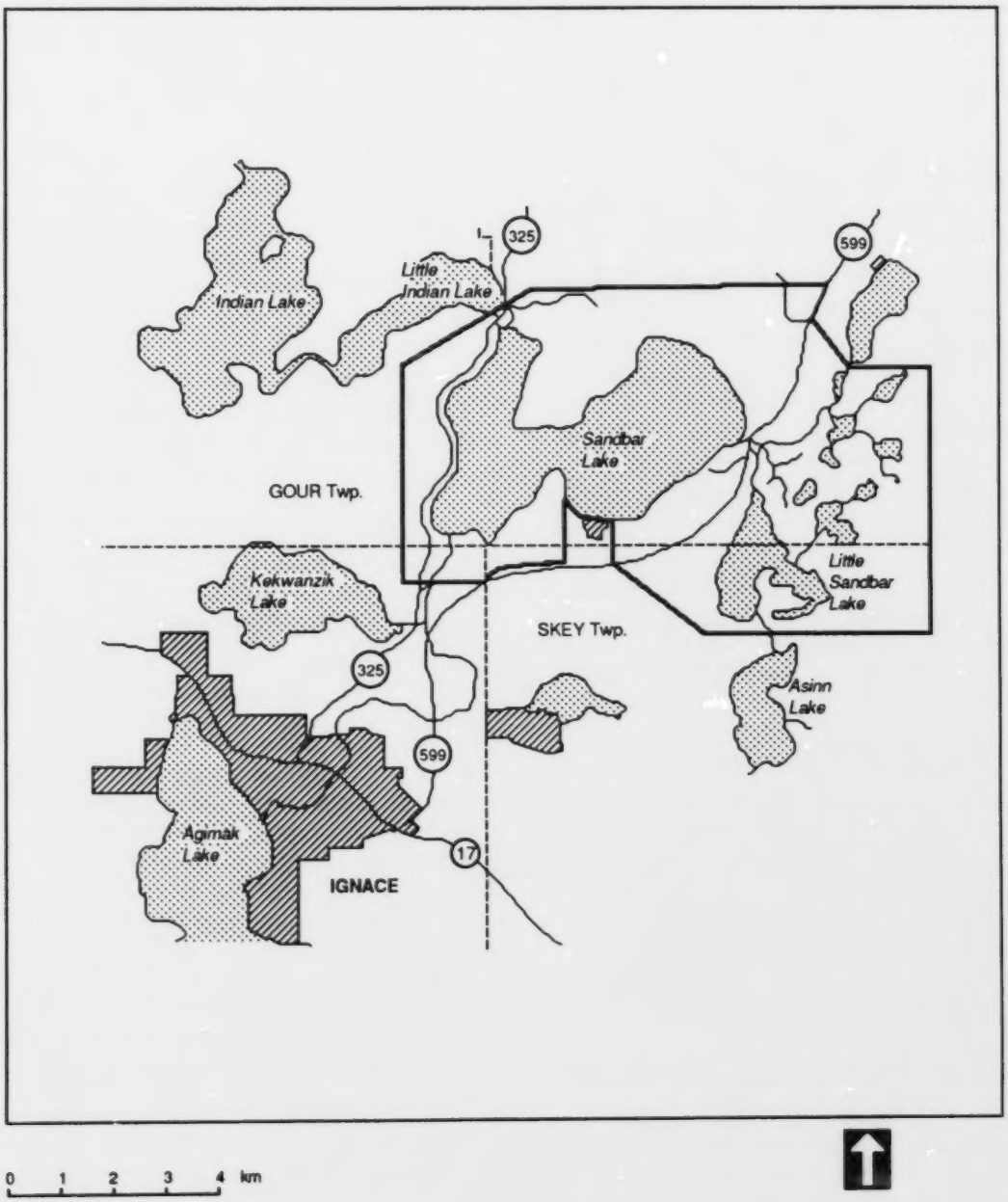
This facility has 12 cabins with a total capacity for 60 people and 20 campsites.

Figure 2

Park Boundary

Patented Land

Park Area



1.1.3 Uncontrolled Access to Sandbar Lake/Patented Lake Adjacent to Park Boundary continued . . .

The majority of tourists use this facility as a base from which to fish other lakes in the area. Further study will be undertaken to determine the amount of angling pressure on Sandbar Lake that is generated by this tourist facility.

In the event that the lodge is offered for sale, the Ministry of Natural Resources will endeavor to purchase this property and incorporate it into the park boundary.

Not only will this resolve issues of unrestricted access, but will further ensure the integrity of the park environment.

1.1.4 Redevelopment and Expansion of Park Facilities

Options for park redevelopment and expansion have been considered and are outlined in Section 5. Several of the existing buildings and facilities in the park are outdated or have deteriorated with age and need replacing. New facilities are also proposed for the provision of increased recreational opportunities.

It is recommended in this plan that upgrading and expansion of park facilities occur to the extent necessary to meet park operating standards and provide an adequate level of service to park users. The timing and final form of park redevelopment will be contingent on priorities for funding, and the preparation and approval of development and site plans.

1.1.5 Existing Traplines

The majority of the park area is contained within the boundary of Trapline IG-48, while a small portion of Trapline IG-36 occupies the park area west of Great Lakes Road 325. The major species quotas are for beaver and marten, and Trapline IG-48 has been licenced to the present trapper since the 1940's.

Because trapping is not a permitted activity in Natural Environment parks, those areas contained within Sandbar Lake Provincial Park will be excluded from the trapline.

1.1.6 Vegetation Management

Due to its large balsam fir component, the park is particularly susceptible to infestation by spruce budworm. Many trees have already died, and many more exhibit advanced, likely irrevocable, stages of affliction.

An insecticide spray program to combat the feeding of the budworm larvae has been in place since 1985, and continued control of the budworm by further aerial and/or ground spraying may be necessary. The natural insecticide Bacillus thuringiensis (B.t.) has been used to spray 130 ha. of land in and adjacent to the developed section of the park. The spray program is viewed as a short term protection measure to provide time for the removal of dead and dying trees for safety reasons.

The removal of hazardous trees, particularly in the campground area, is accompanied by the encouragement of regeneration by more budworm resistant species, including poplar and birch. This program towards "stand-conversion" was begun in 1981 and already is deemed to be quite successful.

1.1.7 Gravel Pits Within Park Boundary

Permits for use of gravel pits lying within the park area and the park expansion area have been issued in the past. There is an existing Ministry of Transportation gravel pit situated within the park on the north side of Highway 599 immediately adjacent to the patented land, but lying within the park boundary.

This issue has recently been resolved as the Ministry of Transportation has agreed to cease any further extraction from pits lying within the park boundary.

The large pit on Highway 599 has been rehabilitated and will be replanted, while the other gravel pit will be rehabilitated by M.N.R. when funding is available.

The other gravel pit in the park is situated south of the Junior Ranger Camp (see Figure 3). Much of this pit will be rehabilitated, while a small portion will remain active to supply aggregate for park maintenance requirements only.

2.0 PARK POLICIES

2.1 Classification

The Ministry of Natural Resources has classified Provincial Parks into the following categories: Wilderness, Recreation, Waterway, Natural Environment, Nature Reserve and Historical.

Sandbar Lake Provincial Park is classified a Natural Environment Park, having been changed in 1983 from the Recreation classification that it had been since its establishment in 1970. (Refer to Section 1.1.1 for a discussion of the park classification issue).

Park expansion in 1986 brought an additional 1,926 hectares into regulation. This added nine lakes of varying sizes, a red pine stand and various other attributes which warranted more than a recreational role for the park. Sandbar Park contains representative and significant samples of earth and life science features, including Arethusa & Hooker's orchid, as well as some species growing at the northern, western and southern limits of their range. The greater emphasis on protection for these natural features further contributes to the appropriateness of the park's Natural Environment Classification.

2.2 Park Goal

"The goal of Sandbar Lake Provincial Park is to protect a provincially significant landscape with associated representative plant, animal, geological and cultural features and to provide high quality recreation and heritage appreciation experiences."

2.3 Park Objectives

2.3.1 Protection

"To protect provincially significant elements of the natural and cultural landscape of Ontario."

Sandbar Lake Provincial Park protects an area of natural landscapes typical of Site Region 4S.

2.3.1 Protection continued . . .

Specifically, the park protects major landscape units representative of the Upper English River Forest Section and the Wabigoon Belt of the Canadian Shield and glacial features including outwash deposits associated with the Hartmann Moraine.

Also protected are the representative boreal vegetative communities, as well as those from the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Forests which are found at the northern limit of their range (e.g. red and white pine, red maple, etc).

As previously stated, the Natural Environment Classification has been deemed most appropriate for Sandbar Lake Provincial Park, due to the protection it affords the park's earth and life science features.

2.3.2 Recreation

"To provide Provincial Park outdoor recreation opportunities ranging from high-intensity day use to low-intensity backcountry experiences."

To meet this objective, park management for recreation will have three thrusts:

- moderate-intensity car camping and day use;
- low-intensity backcountry day use and overnight camping; and
- day-use on Sandbar Lake.

If fully utilized, the park has the capacity to provide 16,000 camper nights and 6,000 day use opportunities annually (Ignace D.L.U.G., 1983). Present use is somewhat below this level. Management direction will serve to promote and develop campground and day-use facilities and visitor service programs that will provide park visitors with a high quality recreational experience.

Sandbar Lake Provincial Park is, according to recent camper surveys (1984), a "stopover" rather than a "destination" park for most of its visitors. The park primarily attracts vacationers who are non-residents of Canada. Campsite occupancy in the park during July and August of 1986 was 57%. Average visitation was two nights duration.

An increasing emphasis of park management will be the provision of opportunities for hiking, canoeing and cross-country skiing in the park interior. The park will continue to offer day-use recreation and facility-based camping. Recreation objectives for the park will focus on developing programmes and activities to encourage "destination" rather than "stopover" visitation.

2.3.3 Heritage Appreciation

"To provide opportunities for exploration and appreciation of the natural and cultural heritage of Ontario."

The visitor services program will provide a range of programs which encourage appreciation of the natural and cultural values of the park environs. The two primary themes for a park interpretive program are: the park's natural history including its ecology, vegetation, hydrology and ecology, as well as the history of man and settlement in the park area. (Refer to Section 4.1.2).

Opportunities for low-intensity recreation to be developed in the park will provide for individual appreciation and enjoyment of these various park values.

Enhancement of interpretive and recreation programs, as well as better park promotion and special events will encourage greater park use.

2.3.4 Tourism

"To provide opportunities for Ontario residents and out-of-province visitors to discover and experience a distinctive region of the province."

The existing provision of day-use facilities and campgrounds and the proposed addition of low-intensity recreational opportunities in the park expansion area will enhance the appeal of the park to the passing traveller, as well as the destination visitor.

Tourism traffic to the park may serve to provide minor economic spin-offs to nearby communities such as Ignace and perhaps to local outfitters (selling ice, boat and motor rentals, etc.). Greater economic impact can be attained by encouraging visitors to stay in the area longer and by providing local attractions.

2.4 Park Boundary

Sandbar Lake Provincial Park was created on February 3, 1970, at which time 3,157 hectares were set aside under Ontario Regulation. In 1974, an expansion of the park was proposed in order to include the adjacent area to the east of Highway 599. The park expansion proposal was again recommended in the Ignace District Land Use Guidelines (1983) and has since been brought into regulation under the Provincial Parks Act. (Refer to Figure 2). This expansion brought the total area of the park to 5,083 hectares, and serves to provide better quality recreational and interpretive opportunities.

The land contained within the park boundary is all Crown land and has been withdrawn from Great Lakes Forest Products timber licence. The park area includes a portion of the uninhabited townships of Gour, Ignace and Skey. The rest of the park is unsurveyed territory within the Territorial District of Kenora.

Adjacent to the park, along the south shoreline of Sandbar Lake, is a private tourist operation located on two parcels of patent land which were purchased in 1955 and 1961. The lodge is accessed off Highway 599 and provides uncontrolled access to Sandbar Lake. Additional unrestricted access to Sandbar Lake is possible from the Great Lakes Forest Road 325. The only other commercial land use in the area has been extraction from several gravel pits along Highway 599 adjacent to the park.

As previously discussed in Section 1.1.2, it is recommended the park's western boundary be delineated to coincide with the Great Lakes 325 Road. This would create a geographic boundary, would deter potential enforcement problems during hunting season and would mean the road could come under jurisdiction of a local services board. This would result in the deregulation of 280 ha.

Figure 3

Park Zoning

Natural Environment Zone

Development Zone

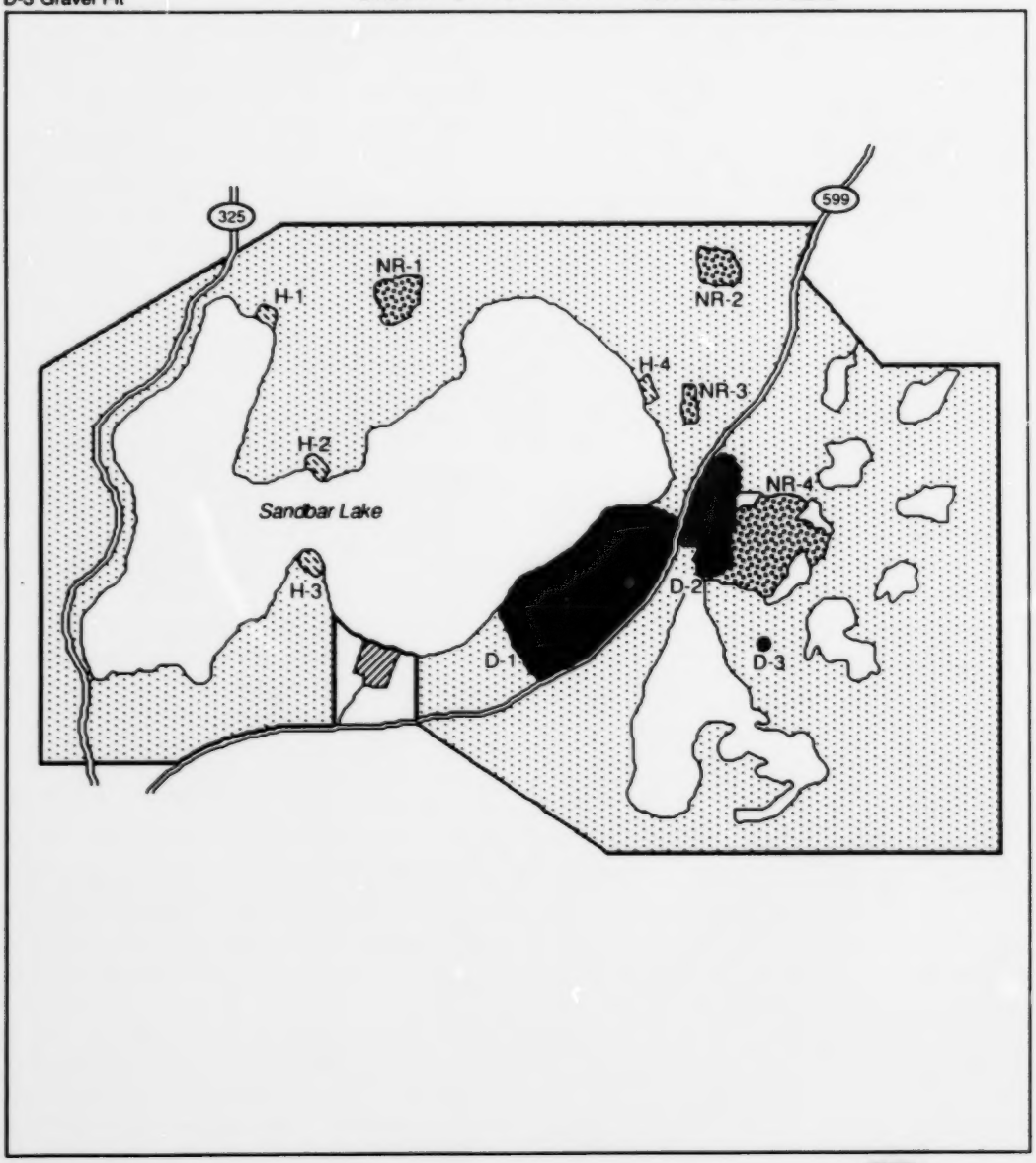
D-1 Campground and Day Use Area
D-2 Junior Ranger Camp
D-3 Gravel Pit

Access Zone

Historical Zone
Prehistoric Habitation
Sites H-1, H-2, H-3, H-4

Nature Reserve Zone

NR-1 Bog Lake (occurrence of Arethusa Orchid)
NR-2 Occurrence of Three-Leaved Cinquefoil
NR-3 Occurrence of Hookers Orchid
NR-4 Red Pine stand



0 1 2 km

Private Land (Tourist Lodge)

Park Boundary continued . . .

of the park area, yet would not in any way detract from the park's natural and recreational features.

2.5 Park Zoning

The lands and waters within Sandbar Lake Provincial Park have been zoned for the purposes of recognition and protection and so that they may be allocated to their most appropriate use (Refer to Figure 3). Acceptable land use activities and types of development are specified by zone classification.

2.5.1 Natural Environment Zone (2700 ha.)

The Natural Environment Zone serves to provide site protection for the representative landscape units in the park.

This zone encompasses somewhat rugged, backcountry landscapes and constitutes the majority of the park area. This zone affords protection to significant park values which may not be significant enough to warrant protection in the Nature Reserve Zone. (e.g. Kettle depressions, Assin Creek meadow community) or the Historical Zone (e.g. dilapidated trapping cabins). This zone protects glacial features associated with the Hartmann Moraine, including eskers, outwash plain, boulder streambeds, proglacial lake basins and boulder lag deposits.

Classification of a Natural Environment Zone also serves to delineate the land area to be utilized in the development of high quality, low intensity recreational opportunities.

Development in this zone will be limited to backcountry camping, hiking trails and route signs where required.

2.5.2 Development Zones (150 ha.)

The Development Zones lie in the central portion of the park and include all facilities and improvements to the park area, such as buildings, campgrounds, roads, day-use area and parking lots. (Figure 3; Zone D-1; 140 ha.). The second development zone includes the Junior Ranger Camp and is situated east of Highway 599. (Refer to Figure 4 for location of facility in the Development Zone). (Zone D-2; 10 ha.).

Generally, those areas of relatively high development capability are reflected in the areas of established development. Thus, any future developments, which may include expanded campgrounds and a new visitor services facility will be located in these zones. There is an area north of Sandbar Lake which has been designated as suitable for potential development, should demand warrant.

2.5.3 Nature Reserve Zones (108 ha.)

The Nature Reserve Zones include those significant earth and life science features in the park which require management distinct from adjacent areas. These areas include the Little Sandbar Lake red pine stand (Figure 3; Zone NR-4; 60 ha.) and a bog lake area which contains the Arethusa orchid (NR-1; 25 ha.). Also protected are the sites which exhibit occurrences of Hooker's Orchid (NR-3; 8 ha.) and three leaved cinquefoil (NR-2; 15 ha.).

Development in these Nature Reserve Zones will be limited to trails, necessary signs, minimal interpretive facilities, and temporary facilities for research and management. Portages and signs necessary for back country travel in the park will be permitted.

2.5.4 Historical Zones (20 ha.)

There are four Historical Zones designated in the park (Figure 2; H-1 to H-4) which incorporate areas of historical and archaeological significance relating to the settlement of the area. These four zones are prehistoric sites, from which several artifacts have been collected and documented. Each of the four zones have been delineated to include approximately five hectares. Evidence of occupation during the Laurel Period (200 B.C. to 400 A.D.) and the Blackduck Period (800 A.D. — contact) has been surmised from these artifacts.

There are also two sites of recent log dwellings located on the shores of Sandbar Lake. These sites are associated with trapping and logging activities during this century, however, current management strategies do not warrant their designation as Historical Zones.

Resource management priorities in these Historical Zones will include protection and research. The provision of heritage appreciation opportunities will be a secondary consideration. Development in the Historical Zones will be limited to interpretive, educational, research, management facilities and historical reconstructions. Trails with interpretive signs will also be permitted in these zones to provide day-use hiking opportunities.

2.5.5 Access Zones (45 ha.)

Access Zones serve as staging areas where minimum facilities support use of the Natural Environment and Historical Zones. There are two Access Zones designated in the park including the main park entrance area (approximately 5 ha.), the area adjacent to Highway 599 including the Junior Ranger Camp and access roads, with an area zoned for potential staging facilities (approximately 40 ha. in area).

Development in these Access Zones will be limited to roads, visitor control structures, basic day-use facilities, campgrounds, any concession services, as well as orientation, interpretive, educational, research and management facilities.

3.0 RESOURCE MANAGEMENT POLICIES

The park will be managed according to the planning and management policies for Natural Environment Class Provincial Parks and in accordance with the following guidelines. Management of the park will be directed towards the maintenance of the natural landscape, and specific management direction will be determined by park zone prescriptions.

Although policies are discussed individually, it is recognized that the components are inter-related and therefore require an integrated resource management approach.

3.1 Land Management

The management of land resources will emphasize the maintenance of

natural landscapes. Refuse and sewage generated by park users, will continue to be disposed of outside the park through certified local facilities. Mineral exploration and mining are not permitted.

No future permits will be issued for the extraction of sand and gravel. The gravel pit on Highway 599 was rehabilitated and will be replanted by Scouts Canada "Trees for Canada" program. The other gravel pit that is currently active is located to the south of the Junior Ranger Camp (see Figure 3). This large pit will be rehabilitated in a manner which complements park values. However, up to 200 cubic yards will continue to be extracted annually from one corner of this pit to serve park maintenance requirements only.

3.2 Water Resources Management

There are ten warmwater lakes of varying sizes and characteristics, as well as several creeks contained within the boundaries of Sandbar Lake Provincial Park. The management of the park's water resources will emphasize the maintenance of good water quality and sufficient flow for fisheries habitat and recreational purposes.

To ensure the maintenance of good water quality for park visitors, drinking and bathing water in the park will be monitored on a regular basis.

3.3 Fisheries Management

Fishery resources of the park will continue to be managed in accordance with policies and regulations prevailing in the area. In addition, all fisheries management activities within the park will adhere to applicable guidelines specified in the Ignace District Fisheries Management Plan.

Sport fishing will be encouraged in all water bodies within the park. There will be no commercial fishing permitted within the park boundary. The park is located within part of a licenced bait-fish block, however, this has been withdrawn from the holder's licence.

3.4 Vegetation Management

The management of vegetation will be directed towards promoting a healthy and natural diversity of vegetation in Sandbar Lake Provincial Park. Commercial forestry operations will not be permitted within the park boundary. The park expansion area was withdrawn from the Great Lakes English River F.M.A. in 1980. However, dead and dying trees will continue to be removed in the Access and Development Zones as part of the hazard reduction program. In these areas, regeneration will continue to be encouraged towards the regeneration of new, budworm-resistant species (eg. birch, aspen) so as to attain "stand conversion". In addition, trees may be selectively removed for the purpose of constructing interior facilities such as corduroy paths and walking trails.

Aerial applications of insecticides to protect the susceptible trees from budworm attack will be permitted as a short-term measure. All natural fires will be suppressed.

A vegetation management strategy will be developed for the park, incorporating the guidelines for Natural Environment class parks in the 'Ontario Provincial Parks Planning and Management Policies'. The plan will more fully address the strategies for 'hazard tree' removals, control of insect infestation (especially budworm) in the park, campground rehabilitation and the control of wildfires in the park.

3.5 Wildlife Management

The management of wildlife in the park will be directed towards promoting healthy and diverse populations. Wildlife viewing will be encouraged in the park, an activity that will be enhanced with the further development of hiking, cross-country skiing and canoeing opportunities.

As determined by provincial legislation, hunting will not be permitted in Sandbar Lake Provincial Park.

Trapline IG-38 and IG-45 encompass Sandbar Lake Park, although the park constitutes only a small portion of these trapline areas. Because trapping is not a permitted activity in a Natural Environment class park, these areas will be removed from these respective traplines.

Nuisance animals may be controlled when necessary to protect human health and safety or the health of species outside the park. When necessary, animal control measures will be carried out by Ministry of Natural Resources staff.

4.0 PARK OPERATIONS POLICIES

A Park Operating Strategy will be prepared annually in keeping with the direction provided in this management plan. Sandbar Lake Provincial Park will be operated in accordance with the provincial operating standards. A manual of "Emergency Operations for Sandbar Lake Provincial Park" (3/87) is in place to direct procedures during accidents or fire and flood emergencies.

The Ministry of Natural Resources will encourage the involvement of the private sector in the provision of park services. This could include boat, motor and canoe rentals as well as food and firewood concessions.

4.1 Visitor Services

A seasonal visitor service program with a strong communication and information component will be re-established in Sandbar Lake Provincial Park. A Visitor Services Strategy will be prepared and will emphasize the significant themes of the park using a combination of staff-led events and programmes, self-use facilities, and a combination of publications and interpretive signs. (Refer to Section 4.1.2 on Resource Interpretation for interpretive themes of the park).

4.1.1 Park Information

The Sandbar Lake Provincial Park leaflet will be periodically reviewed and upgraded to accurately reflect the resources and recreational opportunities offered in the park environment.

Trail brochures are currently available for the existing Rockcliff Trail. Information will also be prepared to coincide with the development of a trail system in the Natural Environment zone east of Highway 599.

Park literature and a sign identifying local tourist attractions will also inform visitors about the services and attractions outside the park. This will serve to enrich visitors' experience, generate local tourism and stimulate the local economy. Information will be provided on the other provincial parks in the region in order to encourage visitation and utilization of the variety of opportunities offered by the Provincial Parks system.

4.1.2 Resource Interpretation

The park interpretive program will convey the park story through a variety of themes:

• Natural History and Ecology

— ecology and forest succession of the Upper English River section (in which the park is situated) and more generally, of the Boreal and Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Forest
— the significant earth and life science features which are exhibited in the park including the red pine stands, bog and fen complexes, orchids, eskers and boulder stream beds
— the geology of the Wabigoon Belt of the Canadian Shield and its distinctive geological features as well as glacial features associated with the Hartmann Moraine, including the outwash plain of the park area
— the hydrology and ecology of Sandbar Lake and the nine other lakes in the park
— the meadow community of the Assin Creek valley (ideally situated adjacent to the day use area)

• History of Man in the Park Environs

— prehistory of human habitation in the area, especially the Laurel and Blackduck peoples as pertaining to their archeological representation in the park area (Figure 3; Historical Zones H-1 to H-4)
— present native use of the land and natural resources of the area
— early logging, trapping and settlement history, especially as it pertains to the park area.

4.1.3 Recreation Skills

Recreation information will acquaint park visitors with the recreational opportunities afforded by the park. To complement the use of a trail system, maps will also be developed to provide information on minimum impact camping practices to enhance visitor skills and improved use and enjoyment of the park.

Interpretive programs will promote such activities as hiking, fishing, boating and canoeing, as well as the appreciation of natural features (flora, red pine stands, etc). Self-use approaches including brochures, signed trails and display panels will be encouraged.

4.2 Recreation Management

Recreation management will be directed towards the provision of moderate to low-intensity recreational opportunities. Expanded backcountry hiking and canoeing opportunities are considered to be complementary to the day-use and car-camping opportunities now present in the park. Those participating in interior camping and canoeing activities will be asked to comply with all possible safety precautions and a low impact camping ethic. Detailed guidelines and procedures for the management and operations of park activities and facilities will be incorporated in the Operating Strategy for the park.

4.3 Commercial Services

Any commercial facilities that may be developed in the park (such as boat and canoe rentals and firewood concession) will be permitted in the Development (ie. Zone D-1 on Figure 3) Zone only. The Park Operating Strategy will detail location, type and extent of development permitted in this zone.

On the south shore of Sandbar Lake adjacent to the park boundary is a commercial tourist lodge. This facility has 12 cabins with a total capacity for 60 persons, which could be utilized by park day users who do not wish to camp (e.g. the elderly, families with young children). There are also 20 campsites associated with this lodge facility.

4.4 Marketing

Upon completion of the Northwestern Region Marketing Strategy, an individual marketing strategy will be prepared for Sandbar Lake Provincial Park. This strategy will be reviewed annually and revised as required.

This marketing strategy will indicate how to make the public aware of what the park has to offer, in terms of facilities and the types of outdoor recreational opportunities.

One objective will be to encourage "destination visits" to the park, by emphasizing the opportunities afforded by the park environment and the facilities and activities located there. This would be aided by the improvement of day-use facilities (e.g. playground, better boat launching and docking facilities). Encouraging interior use of the park for camping, hiking and canoeing as well as weekend use by local residents should further contribute to this end. The promotion of using the park in the off-season for crosscountry skiing and snowshoeing will also attract greater visitation.

The hosting of special "family days" in the park for the tourists and residents of local communities would further promote park use. These program days would be held on holiday weekends, or similarly, at low points in the season and offer picnics (e.g. fish fry or BBQ), children's games and evening campfire programs.

Most importantly, the reintroduction of the park interpretive program along with the development of a new Visitor Centre should contribute to increasing visitation trends. Visitor services can play a vital role in marketing, since the information component is often the means by which publicity is achieved.

4.5 Research

Research which contributes to the knowledge of the natural and cultural values and recreation management of the park will be encouraged. All research will require approval by the Ministry of Natural Resources and must be conducted in accordance with policy direction. Appropriate research topics may include earth and life science studies, site planning for future trail locations and further investigation of archeological sites in the park.

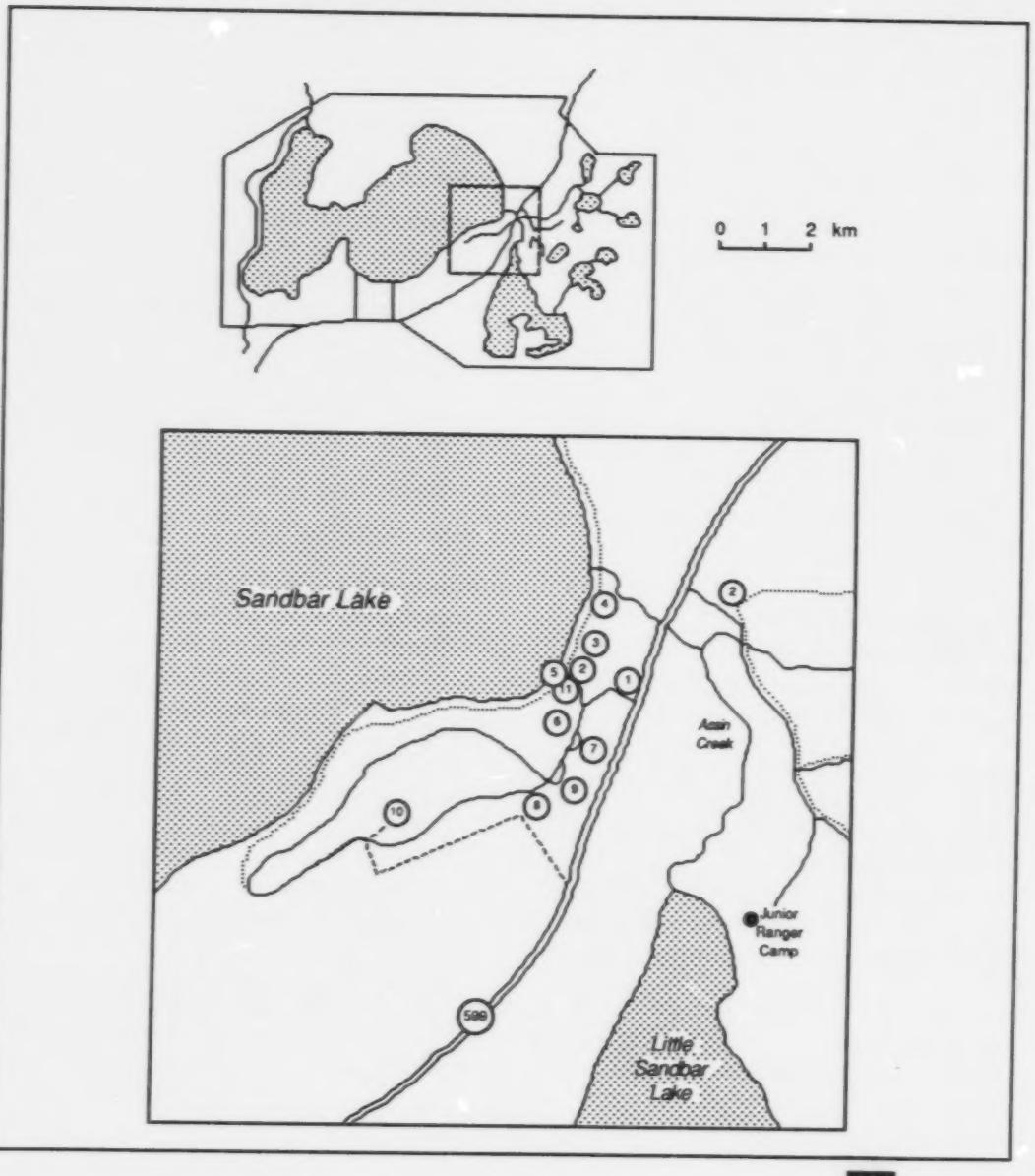
Figure 4

Park Facilities

1. Gate House
2. Day Use Parking
3. Picnic Shelter
4. Change Houses
5. Boat Launch
6. Group Camping Area
7. Trailer Dumping Station
8. Maintenance Building
9. Woodyard
10. Comfort Station
11. Fish House

Trails

Hydro Line



5.0 DEVELOPMENT

Figure 4 depicts the location of proposed and existing park facilities. The location, design and materials of all facilities constructed within the park will, as fully as possible, reflect the character of the park. All development will be carried out in accordance with approved site plans and development strategies.

New facilities will be developed through work program planning or special funding initiatives. Once constructed, new facilities will be managed in accordance with the Park Operating Strategy. The construction of these new facilities will depend on availability of funding.

5.1 Campground Redevelopment

A Campground Redevelopment Plan will be prepared which will specify improvements to existing campground facilities and guide construction of future developments.

Contingent upon funding and the development of specific site plans, the following improvements would be undertaken. Several additional campsites would be upgraded to provide electrical service. The campsites will be levelled and the road through the campground paved. The present electrical campsites are fully utilized and more sites are required. Additional campsites or perhaps even walk-in tent sites may be developed adjoining the west side of the present campground, if demand warrants.

5.2 Day Use Facilities

Due to their deteriorated state the existing change houses and fish cleaning hut will be removed as soon as possible and new facilities constructed.

Parking lots will be upgraded and better defined to enable a more orderly use of day-use facilities.

A new boat launch and dock facility will be constructed in the vicinity of campsite 4, which is a preferable location to the present one due to better water depth. It is also further removed from swimming and beach activities. A children's playground will be built adjacent to the picnic shelter.

5.3 Visitor Centre

A Visitor centre will be constructed in the day-use area.

The primary role of this facility will be program presentation of the interpretive themes for the park. The facility will be designed and constructed according to program needs and will contain an activity area, office and work space for visitor services staff.

5.4 Access/Park Entrance Improvements

Site plans will be developed for improvements to park access in various locations. The gatehouse will be replaced and the main park entrance reconstructed to allow vehicle traffic to enter and leave the park on opposite sides of the gatehouse, respectively. Park entrance and campground roads will be paved.

Contingent on demonstrated demand and subsequent site planning, a road may be constructed to access the potential Development Zone situated near the northern boundary of the park.

5.5 Interior Trails

The existing interior hiking and cross-country ski trail system east of Highway 599 will be upgraded and expanded in the Natural Environment Zone to enable visitors to further discover and experience the park's natural setting.

Self-guiding interpretive walking trails will be developed in this area of the park. These would provide access to the red pine stand, eskers, kettle formations, and the fen and bog communities.

A Trail Development Strategy will be prepared to guide this development, incorporating site planning with resource protection, recreation management and resource interpretation components. This trail system may eventually be expanded, as determined by demand and funding priorities.

5.6 Other Facilities

Proposals for new facilities have been considered and may be constructed, contingent on demonstrated demand and funding availability.

These include a visitor centre as well as alternate forms of accommodation which look after the needs of the elderly and handicapped. The possibilities of construction of remote cabins on interior hiking and canoe routes will be investigated. The buildings may be constructed to facilitate use during winter months, and would serve to benefit local residents as well as park visitors.

The possibility of such facilities will be subject to further study and, as part of the planning process, public input will be sought.

6.0 PLAN IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW

6.1 Plan Implementation

Implementation of this Management Plan, will involve resource management operations and site planning, visitor services, and facility development. Implementation of this plan is contingent upon funding approval through work planning and other funding sources.

6.1.1 Implementation Strategies

Implementation of this Management Plan will involve the preparation of operating, visitor service, trail development, vegetation management, and marketing strategies. The Park Operating Strategy will be prepared to provide specific guidelines on the various park programs including the preparation of the visitor service, vegetation management and marketing plans.

6.1.2 Visitor Services Program

A visitor services program will be reintroduced with the approval of a Visitor Services Strategy and the provision of funding required to operate the program.

Increased opportunities for backcountry travel will be created in the Natural Environment Zone. It is expected that the Rockcliff Trail will reopen, pending clearing of budworm damaged trees, repair of the bridge, and resolution of risk management strategies. The provision of these opportunities will be provided by visi-

tor services staff at the Visitor Services Centre, and by the distribution of selfguiding trail leaflets. Interpretive trails, which incorporate portions of the existing cross country ski trails, will also be developed.

6.1.3 Park Redevelopment Priorities

Priorities for redevelopment of park facilities have been determined through an examination of the following: existing and future program needs, present and projected levels of visitation, and the structural condition of present park facilities. Proposed developments have been discussed in Section 5.0 and are ranked here in order of priority:

a) Dock and Boat Launch
b) Playground Equipment in day-use area
c) Fuel Storage Facility
d) Fish House replacement
e) Re-surface gravel roads and campsites
f) Change House replacement
g) Provide additional electrical service to existing campsites
h) Entrance redesign complete with entry station
i) Visitor Services Building
j) Pave park roads
k) Walk-in tent sites
l) Interpretive trail development utilizing existing portions of cross-country ski trails.

6.2 Plan Review and Amendment

This Sandbar Lake Provincial Park Management Plan will be reviewed as warranted during its 20 year timeframe. As a minimum requirement, the plan will be reviewed ten years after approval.

Review of this plan may become necessary from time to time to ensure the continuing relevance of the plan's content. This need may arise in the face of changing circumstances where park objectives and management policies are no longer appropriate. It may also be necessitated by a proposal which represents a significant departure from the original direction and intent of the plan, or in the event that, during its term, the plan is rendered obsolete.

Revisions to the approved Park Management Plan, whether as the result of a scheduled or unscheduled review, may require:

- a re-evaluation of the original background information and issues used in the original planning program; and

- a determination as to the scope of the review, which could range from concluding that the provisions of the original plan were still appropriate; to application of the entire park management planning process if it was felt that the plan had major shortcomings in light of current knowledge; and

- provision of a formal opportunity for public involvement in the review, which could range from an INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE and notification of results; to the application of the complete park planning process; and

- production of the Park Management Plan Review document or a new Management Plan.

If a new plan results from an unscheduled review, the reasons for the unscheduled review must also be documented in the new plan.

7.0 PUBLIC CONSULTATION

The Ministry of Natural Resources is committed to a policy of public consultation. The scope of public involvement in a management plan will vary directly with the significance of the park's resources and the level of concern and interest in the planning issues related to the park. Public consultation during this management planning process involved the following components:

1. The Sandbar Lake Provincial Park Background Information document and the Preliminary Park Management Plan, were made available for public review and comment. Notices in the Ignace, Dryden, Thunder Bay and Kenora newspapers announced that the plan was available for public perusal.

2. Copies of both documents were placed in libraries in Ignace, Dryden, Kenora and Thunder Bay. Additional copies were placed at Ministry of Natural Resources offices in Ignace, Dryden and Kenora (Regional Office Library).

3. Letters announcing the plan's availability for review were sent to all interested parties. These included; neighbouring land owners, Municipalities of Ignace, other government agencies such as Ministry of the Environment, provincial and federal members of parliament, local Services Board and interested members of the public (e.g. respondents to park issues in the Ignace District Land Use Planning exercise).

4. A small display summarizing highlights of the Management Plan was set up at the Ignace District M.N.R. office. The park Background Information document and the Preliminary Management Plan were also available for public perusal, and input from the public was sought.

5. All public input was to be analysed by the Ministry of Natural Resources and incorporated into the final draft of the Sandbar Lake Provincial Park Management Plan, however no public input was received for the Preliminary Management Plan.

8.0 REFERENCES

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